

A BOLT OF LIGHTNING

Klu thar rgyal ལུ་ཐར་རྒྱལ།

G.yang skyid went to fetch water and met two local women who were watering their livestock at the only water source in their winter pastures, which was shared by thirty families. The three women laughed loudly together, suggesting they were very close friends. After they exchanged gossip, G.yang skyid left with her plastic container full of water.

"Why does she fetch water alone? Doesn't she have neighbors?" the younger woman asked after G.yang skyid left.

"She doesn't feel alone. G.yang skyid likes talking to herself and enjoys her own jokes," the older woman said while watching G.yang skyid's diminishing back.

The young woman laughed, thinking the older woman must be joking.

"Oh! You are a new wife here. You don't understand, so let me explain. She once had a neighbor and a husband," the older woman said.

"What happened?" the younger woman asked curiously.

"I don't know, but many say she made the neighbor leave and drove her husband to his death," the older woman replied.

"How did she do that? She doesn't seem like that kind of woman," the young woman asked, puzzled.

"I heard that her neighbor's yaks ate barley in her family's field every year, but the neighbor wouldn't admit it, so the two neighbors stopped visiting each other. Conflict followed. You know, the most interesting thing was the two men in those families were brothers. Later, one brother built a house on the other side of the hill in their private pasture. The two families then lived separated by quite some distance."

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†Klu thar rgyal. 2019. A Bolt of Lightning. *Asian Highlands Perspectives* 58:427-428.

"How did her husband die?" the younger woman asked.

"He was killed by a bolt of lightning one stormy night while out visiting a woman," the old woman explained.

"How awful! What terrible things did she do in a previous life?"

"That's what I say!"

#### TIBETAN TERMS

g.yang skyid གཡང་སྐྱིད།

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